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**Merryman, Frank**

**The history of the  
wits jubilee**

**Edinburgh**

**1793**

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: containing variety of diverting jests, the whole designed  
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excite mirth, open the countenance, improve the  
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---

By the Famous Mr MERRYMAN and  
BEN. JOHNSON.

---

EDINBURGH:  
Printed in this present Year 1793.

## FRANK'S APOLOGY.

[Written by a FRIEND.]

**F**RANK MERRYMAN hath always been solicitous to live upon friendly terms with all his acquaintances, notwithstanding his peculiar cast for gleesome recreation; and therefore enjoins his Editors to keep in readiness some tolerable apology on his behalf; not that he would have it even supposed, that he ever wishes to suppress his more favourable idea of chearful company. Every man in his own humour, (saith Frank) consequently he is free to assert the native privilege of riding his own HOBBY, and inoffensively keeping up sociality and good humour.

Frank is one who adds not a word too much, or says too little; who can, in a careless manner, give a great deal of pleasure to others, and desires rather to divert than be applauded; who shews good understanding and a delicate turn of wit in every thing that comes from him; who can entertain his company, though he only tells a tale of a child and its hobby-horse. In a word, Frank has always been the very life and soul of all our friendly meetings, which have never failed to conclude as chearful as begun.

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## WITS JUBILEE, &c.

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FRANK diverting himself with shooting in Monmouthshire, a busy Welsh justice rudely demanded him to produce his qualification, adding, that he would take care, on account of his authority, and the little manners he had, that no unqualified person should shoot there. "I know little of your authority," replied Frank, "but as to your having *little manners*, that is plain enough to every body."

A poor but worthy clergyman, who possessed only a small lectureship, from the income of which he had a large family to maintain had been under the necessity, through some expensive fami-

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ly

ly sicknesses, of contracting debts with several in the parish, and being unable to answer their demands, absconded for some time for fear of being troubled: and, in short, was so ashamed of facing his creditors, that he even prevailed with a friend to officiate for him on Sundays. However, considering this method of life could not last long, he took courage, and resolved to preach the following Sunday before his parishioners; when he took his text from the New Testament, in these words: "Have patience, and I will pay you all." He divided his discourse into two general heads: first, *have patience*; secondly, *and I will pay you all*. He expatiated very largely and elegantly on that most Christian virtue, patience; after which, "and now," says he, "having done with my first head, viz. 'have patience,' I come to my second and last general head, which is, 'and I will pay you all;'—but that I must defer till another opportunity." Which excellent conclusion so pleased his creditors, that they gave him his own time to



to pay his debts, assuring him, that they would never trouble him.

Dr Bently shewing a lady the fine library in Trinity College, and, among the rest of the books, were his own writings curiously bound, asked the lady, "How she liked the binding?" The lady answered, "They were extremely handsome, but she chose rather to have his *works in sheets*."

Frank was once going in a return post-chaise from Bath to Bristol, when the post-boy, for the sake of encreasing his perquisite, took up another passenger a short way from the city, who turned out to be a mighty disagreeable fellow-traveller; for he was not only extremely corpulent, but was much addicted to expel wind at both extremities; add to this, it was pretty warm weather, and the effluvia of the horse was very obnoxious. Under these disagreeable circumstances, Frank began to meditate how he should get rid of his companion, without being at the expence of another vehicle; and his imagination supplied him, upon his fel-

low-traveller asking him, if he should make any long stay at Bristol? when Frank answered, that would depend upon the effects of the salt waters. "What," resumed his companion, "are you going to drink it?"—"No, Sir," answered Frank, "I am going to be dipped."—"Pray Sir," rejoined the querist, with some precipitancy, "what may be your disorder?"—"Why, Sir," said Frank, "if you can keep a secret, I will tell you—I have been bit by a mad dog."—"Bit by a mad dog, Sir," said the other, with no small emotion: "I hope that you have not communicated your disorder to any one in the same manner."—"Really," answered Frank, "to be ingenious with you, it was but yesterday that I bit my own sister; and if my wife had not escaped out of the window, she would have shared the same fate."—"The devil she would!" resumed the traveller: "I am in a very comfortable situation; then." Frank now displayed some distortions of features and gesticulations, that convinced his fellow-traveller the critical fit was coming on; so that, had Frank not begun to bark and howl like a dog, he

he would not have staid longer with him; as it was, he thought it highly prudent to open the chaise-door, and, at the risk of his neck, jump out and left his mad companion.

When a Rev. doctor was preaching in Tottenham-court-road, an enthusiastic descriptive sermon comparing the state of man to a ship at sea, a presbytery came into the chapel, and attended to the discourse with much gravity. "Now," says the Doctor, "after your calm and fine weather is over, comes a sudden storm, you are driven on a lee-shore, the billows dash against the rocks, and all is horror and death around; your sails are blown from your yards, your masts go by the board, you let go your anchors, your very anchor of hope, your cables part; alas! alas! what will ye do?" "Do!" says one of the tars, "d—n my eyes, take to the long boat."

A sea captain being just come ashore, was invited by some gentlemen to a hunting match. After his sport was over, he gave his friends this particular account of what pastime he had: "Our  
horses

horses being completely rigged, we manned them, and the wind being S. W. tweney of us being in company, away we set oyer the Downs. In the time of half a watch we spied a hark under a full gale; we tacked, and stood after her: coming up close, she tacked, and we tacked, upon which tack I had like to have run aground; but getting close, off I stood after her again; but as the devil would have it, just about to lay her aboard, bearing too much wind, I and my horse overset, and came keel upwards."

Frank travelling eo the north once, put up at a bye inn on the road, where he was rather distressed for accommodations. "What," says he, "have you no cold meat in the house, landlord?" "No, Sir," says the host, "we have not dressed any for some days, as my poor wife lies dead up stairs."—"Zounds!" says Frank, "never complain again of your larder, for there is no cold meat equal to a dead wife."

Frank seeing a young lady of his acquaintance, in company with one Mr Child:



Child, went to the young lady's father, and told him with a sigh, "That he was sorry to be the messenger of ill news;" but, said he, "with grief I express it, your daughter is *with child*." "What I say is not merely conjecture, but absolute fact, and I am ready to take my oath that your daughter is *with child*." The old gentleman was extremely shocked to hear of such a charge against his only daughter, whom he tenderly loved, and of whose chastity he had always entertained the highest opinion. In short, the old gentleman was almost crazy, and Frank had too much humanity to let him remain any longer in that situation, but banished all his sorrows in the following words: "I saw your daughter this morning, she was *with child*, and by me.—That is, she was with Mr Child, the Attorney, and *by me*, because *I was near her*."

An Irish gentleman, in company with some friends at a tavern, hearing some persons walking up stairs, offered to lay a wager, that he knew who was coming

coming. The wager was accepted and won, for the gentleman whom he had named appeared. "I was sure I should win," said the honest Hibernian, for *"I knew the voice of his foot."*

The late king of Prussia, who loved to converse with his subjects, being on a journey to Breslaw, passing by a farmer's house near Schweidnitz, observed that he had abundance of fine cattle, and a remarkable large dunghill. The monarch asked him, how he contrived to manage so much better than his neighbours? "My father," said the farmer, was killed by your majesty's side, and I have the indulgence of being exempted from taxes which will always encrease a farmer's stock and prosperity." "I am glad you have experienced this," said the king; "but I am afraid we must be content to see smaller dunghills if the war continues; for my people must be *defended* as well as *fed*."

A gentleman observing on the smartness of C. F—, while he was yet a lad, another who was standing by observed, that

that when children discovered so much genius in their early years, they generally grew very stupid when they come to maturity. "If that is the case," said C. E. "then you must have been very remarkable for your genius when you were a child."

One who had been obliged to take up his lodgings in St George's Fields, being brought up by habeas corpus to give evidence on a trial at Westminster Hall, Counsellor Dunning asked him with a sneer, Whether he was not a King's Bench Collegian? "Yes, Sir," replied the other, "and I really thought by residing there I should have avoided the impertinences of *Dunning*."

A certain American officer boasting before one of the generals, that he was wounded in the face in a late action with the royalists, his general knowing him to be a coward, at first took no notice of what he advanced; but on his repeating the boast, only advised him, the next time he run away, not to look behind him.

A certain modern philosopher having been at great pains to define the meaning of the term *beautiful*, at length gave it as his opinion, that every thing was beautiful which answered the end. Some time after, the philosopher having taken a dose of very bitter physic, Frank, who had heard his definition, asked him, whether the medicine had operated as it was designed? "Yes," replied the philosopher. "It was *beautiful physic*," cried Frank. "By no means," returned the moralist, "it had an ill look, smell and taste, and made me for the present very sick." A few days afterwards, this philosopher having offended a stout man, who gave him the discipline of the horsewhip, Frank, who was present, interposed to save him, but could not help observing, that it was a *beautiful whip*. "I could not see the beauty of it," said the philosopher. "Oh," replied Frank, "it must be beautiful, according to your own description, for it certainly answered the end for which it was intended."

Two Scotchmen meeting on the northern road, he who was travelling southward



Southward, requested the other to give him some account of the capital, adding, "it is very strange, that we can get but a very imperfect description of so great a city in our parts, from whence so many go thither." Not at all," replied the northern traveller, "*it is because so few ever think proper to come back again.*"

A certain eminent tradesman in the city, not more remarkable for a near description than for a competent stock of assurance, which he generally displayed a great portion among his female acquaintance, being asked for charity by one who seemed a real object, replied, according to his usual phrase, "I have no copper, friend." "That is often the gentleman's case," said a lady in company, "but, however, to make amends, he always carries *brass* enough about him."

A macaroni gentleman in the military line, having given a foldier a threshing with his cane for "*looking* saucily and scornfully," as he expressed it, one of his brother officers laying something in

in the man's behalf, the other said, he believed the fellow might be a good man, but he could not always command his temper. The veteran officer observed, that he had been always seen to command it in company of his equals. The macaroni then said, that was because they never provoked him, nor looked scornfully at him. "I am of a different opinion," answered his brother officer, surveying him with a look of supreme contempt; "I have now contradicted you, and am at this time provoking you much more than the poor fellow did, and yet you bear it with all the calmness of philosophy." The other sneaked off and thus proved, that his *courage* was just equal to his *humanity*."

A physician, boasting his great knowledge in his profession, said he never heard any complaint from his patients. Frank Merryman being in company, wittily replied, "very likely, doctor, for the faults of physicians are generally buried with their patients."

Frank, a man admired for his wit, but whose fault was, that he would sometimes

sometimes rather lose his friend than his jest, having made some verses upon a scolding wife, a gentleman, his patron and benefactor, hearing them repeated, desired Mr Merryman to oblige him with a copy of them; to which Frank very prudently replied, "it is needless to give you a copy, doctor, for you have the original."

Merryman, going to take water at Whitehall Stairs, cried out, as he came near the place, "Who can swim?" "I master," said forty bawling mouths; when Frank observing one flinking away, called after him; but the fellow turning about, said, "Sir, I cannot swim;" "Then you are my man," said Merryman, "for you will at least take care of me for your own sake."

A gentleman, the first time he went to Bath, was very extravagantly charged for every thing by the persons in whose house he lodged, as well as by others whom he had occasion to deal with; of which, soon after complaining to Mr Merryman, "Sir," replied the latter, "they have acted towards you

you on truly Christian principles. —  
 “How so?” says the man, “Why,”  
 returned Frank, “You was a stranger,  
 and they took you in.”

Mr Merryman, being in company,  
 among whom there was a gentleman  
 who was remarkable for a kind of rude  
 satyrical wit, and who having levelled  
 his jeers at almost all present, chiefly by  
 mimicking their voice, gestures, or *ta-*  
*king them off*, as it is commonly called;  
 Frank expecting it would presently  
 come to his turn, got up and was go-  
 ing away. When being asked the rea-  
 son of his leaving the company so soon,  
 he replied, *In order to save the gentle-*  
*man the trouble of taking me off, I think*  
*it best to take myself off*; and so departed.

A great crowd being gathered about  
 a poor cobbler, who had just died in the  
 street, a man asked the watchman what  
 was to be seen? Only a *cobbler's end*, re-  
 plied he.

As a boy was leading a calf with  
 both hands, a nobleman happened to  
 pass by upon the highway; the boy, it  
 seems

seems, minded the calf more than the lord, and went drudging on, without moving his hat. *Why sirrah,* says the nobleman, *have you no more manners than to stand staring me in the face with your hat on? Alas!* says the boy, *I'll pull off my hat with all my heart, if your lordship will but 'light, and hold my calf in the mean time.*

A merry cobbler, as he sat stitching in his stall, was singing a piece of his own composition, wherein he very often repeated these words, viz. *the King said to the Queen, and the Queen said to the King.* — What was it the King said to the Queen? said one who heard him. Crispin snatches up his strap, and lays it with all his might across the shoulders of the impertinent querist: *How now, saucybox!* says he, *it's a fine age we live in, when such coxcombs as you must be prying into matters of state! I'd have you to know, sirrah, I am too loyal a subject to betray the King's secrets, and pray get you gone, and don't interrupt me in my lawful occupation, lest with my awl I put an end to your folly.*



At Derby affizes in 1788, a woman was convicted of stealing to the value of tenpence; the clerk of the affize called out, " Mary Jones ! you are found guilty of stealing value tenpence " --- " Very well," answered the prisoner, (putting her hand in her pocket,) " Here, take a shilling, give me tenpence."

At an entertainment given by the heads of a parish, where Mr Merryman was invited, the company, when the glass had gone round a little, began to sing and be merry; when the clerk of the parish, who sung very agreeably, was so conscious of his merit, that he began to grow very troublesome, and would not suffer any gentleman to sing, except such songs as he thought proper to call for. " Heyday, Mr Amen," says Merryman, " this is making too free, methinks; for though you make the company sing what you please on Sundays, I can see no reason you should oblige them to do so every day in the week."

An Oxford scholar being informed that a carrier, who stopped at the door, was

was an arch fellow, thus attacked him :  
 " Why, they tell me, my friend, that  
 you are a very wise man " " May be  
 so, says the fellow " " And that you  
 know all London," continued the scholar,  
 " and every body in it ; Pray, can  
 you tell where I live ? " " In Knave's  
 Acre," says the carrier ; " Ay, but I'm  
 about to move," says the Oxonian :---  
 " And that will be to Tyburn," quoth  
 the other.

In one of the floods in 1785, a farmer's wife was taken in labour, and no person proper to assist her living nearer than seven miles, the good husband rode with the utmost speed to Dr Rhubarb, whom he begged instantly to go to his wife. The doctor being a knowing one, declared, though his usual fee was two guineas at such a distance, when no danger appeared ; yet now, (said he ) as I must go at the imminent hazard of my life, I shall not budge one foot, unless you agree to give me ten guineas. The farmer in vain remonstrated on his inability to perform such a demand : Rhubarb was inflexible.--- The honest countryman's love to his

his Joan rose above every objection, and he at last engaged to raise the money. They got to the farm-house through much difficulty, and in an hour or two the doctor presented the master of the house with a fine boy, and demanded his exorbitant fee; which the farmer immediately gave him, and they drank each a glass of ale to the boy's future welfare.---By this time the flood was greatly increased, and real danger threatened the doctor in his return; on which (not being at all acquainted with the way,) he intreated the farmer to lose no time in conducting him back. "My friend (you would not come to help my wife who was in real distress, unless I promised to give ten guineas, when only an imaginary danger was before you; but there is now a real hazard in my venturing to shew you the way back; therefore, unless you will give me nine guineas for my trouble in conducting you home, you may abide where you are until the next dry season.---All replies were in vain; no art could make any impression on the countryman; Rhubarb was obliged to return nine guineas; the farmer landed him.



him safe among his gallipots, and the honest man got well home again, triumphing over inhumanity and avarice.

A chimney sweeper's boy had just swept the chimney of a barber's shop in London, and while the boy was tying up his foot, some of the journey-men, who were at work in the shop, being inclined to use their wit on the poor lad, among other questions asked him, what trade his father was? To which the boy very archly replied, "What trade? Why, my father was a barber, and I might have been a barber too; but to tell you the truth, I did not like such a blackguard business."

A person asking a foundling, who had been bred up by charity, but had rose in life, who his parents were?---"Do you remember, Sir," said he to the querist. "when you were born or begotten? If you do, I confess you have an astonishing memory."

A humorous fellow, a carpenter, being subpoenaed as a witness on a trial for an assault; one of the counsel, who was very much given to browbeat the evidence,

evidence, asked what distance he was from the parties when he saw the defendant strike the plaintiff? The carpenter answered, " Just four feet five inches and a half " " Pr'ythee fellow," says the counsel, " how is it possible you can be so very exact as to the distance ?" *I thought, perhaps,* (replied he) *that some fool or other might ask me, so I measured it.*

An arch foot boy, who was bringing to the table a calf's head, between the kitchen and the dining-room, pickt out one of its eyes and eat it; the gentleman who had got the eye that was left, missing the other, asked the boy after it, who confessed his having taken it; but how do you do it, says the gentleman? *just so* said the boy, and snatching up the other from the gentleman's plate, swallowed it.

Frank Merryman, seeing one coming towards him where he stood, asked who it was, and being told that it was Lord B---g, said, " I thought it was a lord, *he looked so little like a gentleman.*"

The

The late Emperor of Germany being told by a foreigner, that it appeared strange in him to make such preparations, when all the powers of Europe were at peace with him. "My friend," said he, this is the way to make them continue so."

The same prince being asked, what was the wisest method of treating an enemy? he answered to forgive the injuries offered. Being farther questioned, what was next proper to be done? he answered, "speedily revenge them; for," said he, "if you cannot bring yourself generously to forgive a man, you must expect utmost efforts of malice; a quick prevention is therefore better than a late remedy."

Dr Graham being on his stage, in order to promote the sale of his medicines, told the country people that he came there for the good of the public, and not for want. Then speaking to his Merry Andrew, "Andrew," says he, "do we come here for want?" No faith, Sir," says Andrew, "we have enough of that at home; besides, (continued

nued he,) my master has a very great estate, that's neither *here* nor *there*."

A gentlewoman being addressed by a barker to an auctioneer, "Pray madam, walk in---why don't you walk in, madam? what are you afraid of?" "*Of being bit*," replied the lady.

A counsellor who was very remarkable for telling long stories, being once got into the middle of a tale, the person to whom he was relating it, expressing a desire to be gone, the gentleman of the long robe said he would tell it him *in brief*. "Aye," replied his acquaintance. "but the *briefs* of counsellors are sometimes two or three hours long."

A shopkeeper selling some goods to one who said, "that he asked too much for them, and that he should not buy so dear of him as of another: because he was his friend:" replied, "Sir, we must gain something by our friends, for our enemies will never come to the shop."

F I N I S.